



**AMB BERNICAT'S CLOSING REMARKS AT THE
MULTINATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY
PROGRAM (MCIP) PLANNING STAFF WORKSHOP (PSW-1) –
(PART OF PACIFIC ENDEAVOR 2018)**

**Westin Hotel, Gulshan II Dhaka
Thursday, March 8, 2018**

Principal Staff Officer (PSO) Lieutenant General Md Mahfuzur Rahman

Colonel Aaron Osburn

Distinguished guests and participants

Assalamu alaiykum.

Thank you for inviting me here today and many thanks to the Bangladesh Armed Forces for hosting this event. Through its years of participation Bangladesh has been a strong supporter of the MCIP Program. This week marked the third occasion the Bangladesh Armed Forces have hosted an MCIP event. This further solidifies your reputation as a key contributor to international peace and security.

The Bangladesh Armed Forces have an especially enviable record of achievement in international peacekeeping as one of the world's largest contributors. Unfortunately, we were reminded this past week how dangerous international peacekeeping can be.

I want to convey my deepest condolences to the families of the four brave Bangladesh soldiers who were killed last week in Mali while helping to bring peace to a worn-torn region. I also want to wish a full and speedy recovery to the four soldiers who were injured in the attack. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you and all of the affected families during this difficult time.

Thanks to all of you for being here for these important closing ceremonies. I also want to convey my gratitude to those who participated in the entire Planning Staff Workshop for your hard work and dedication.

Your efforts this week will help us better respond to common challenges in the future. This region, as we know, is especially prone to natural disasters. Many of you here today have had to respond to such disasters and understand all too well the importance of communications. When



these disasters involve multiple agencies and require a multinational response, communications becomes that much more difficult and makes workshops like MCIP critical.

For many here today this is the first opportunity to participate in MCIP. MCIP is unlike any other program of its kind in that it brings together communications professionals from a variety of backgrounds and skills, military and non-military, government and non-government entities. Representatives from 16 nations came together to initiate communications planning leading towards MCIP's capstone event, PACIFIC ENDEAVOR, which will take place in August in Kathmandu.

The Technical planners represented this week began the arduous task of developing a communications plan incorporating a variety of communications systems which will be tested during PACIFIC ENDEAVOR.

During this week, participants here have had the opportunity to hear from Bangladesh's Department of Disaster Management, the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, and its 86th Independent Signal Brigade. This kind of sharing of processes and experiences is what makes this kind of workshop so useful.

Hopefully, MCIP has helped establish a framework for information-sharing and collaboration so that when the time comes, we can immediately and collaboratively provide the necessary response needed to save lives.

Also important is the sharing of cultural awareness and experiences. The opportunities this week to learn more about Bangladesh, its traditions and history has given everyone a better understanding of our Bangladesh partners. The collaboration and critical relationships established here this week will help ensure communications are available during times of crisis. As you all depart and return back to your duty locations, I hope that the positive momentum fostered during this week's Planning Staff Workshop will provide a good basis for cooperation as preparations are made for the second 2018 Planning Staff Workshop in Indonesia and for Pacific Endeavor 2018 in Kathmandu.

Thank you for your attention and for allowing me a few minutes to share my thoughts with you.

GR/2018

**As prepared for delivery*